



Department  
for Transport

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Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Active Travel Fund: Local Authority Capital Funding for 2021/22 and expressions of interest for Mini Hollands and GP Prescribing Pilot**

This letter invites your local authority to bid for capital funding for the current financial year 2021/22, to support delivery of ambitious new cycling and walking infrastructure schemes. This funding is part of the Government's £2 billion commitment set out in "[Gear Change](#)" to deliver a step change in the provision of high quality schemes that deliver better streets for everyone.

Bids must be submitted by **Monday 9 August but you are encouraged to bid sooner**. Combined Authorities are expected to produce a single bid on behalf of their constituent authorities. Funding for London boroughs is being handled separately, and London boroughs do not need to submit proposals to the Department for Transport.

The Department does not intend to set indicative capital allocations. To give an indication of scale, the total amount of funding being made available is £239 million, and eligible local authorities may therefore receive broadly similar levels of funding to 2020/21; however, to qualify for any funding at all this year, authorities must commit to the following key principles:

1. The Department only intends to fund schemes which comply with the [Cycling Design Standards](#) set out in local transport note LTN 1/20. All cycling schemes will need to include segregation or point closures to through traffic. Advisory cycle lanes, and those marked only with white paint, will not be funded. We expect local authorities and developers to utilise the guidance in the design of all schemes regardless of whether they are seeking Government funding. Over the coming months, we will be offering training events aimed at local highway teams, active travel teams and accessibility teams, covering the key features of the standards, and its supporting tools.
2. All authorities are to undertake network planning to inform prioritisation of future schemes, in the form of [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans \(LCWIPs\)](#) or similar local strategies. This helps to ensure that schemes are integral to long term investment plans and are driven by local demand for cycling and walking infrastructure. LCWIPs should be supported by your authority at the

very highest levels of leadership; developed in consultation with local communities; and integrated with your local transport plans, as well as wider plans for public health, economic development and carbon reduction. These plans must also show proper integration with cross-modal schemes, such as opportunities for boosting cycling and walking around HS2, East West Rail, Highways England, Restoring Your Railways, Historical Railways Estate and National Cycle Network schemes.

We know that many authorities have already developed LCWIPs with support via the Department's pilot support programme, or through your own independent work. If your authority has yet to develop a LCWIP, or it is at an early stage of development, the Department will be offering dedicated technical support in partnership with Sustrans to help you develop your future plans. We will provide further details of this support, and what you need to do to access it, shortly. Authorities without LCWIPs are still able to bid for capital funding this year, but it must be demonstrated that proposed schemes fit into a robust long-term network plan, which will need to be provided as part of the bidding process.

3. All schemes must include plans to be **developed in consultation with local communities**, in line with the process set out for the Active Travel Fund (see Annex A). As we have set out in previous letters, consultation does not mean giving anyone a veto, requiring consensus on schemes, or prioritising the loudest voices. It could include adopting measures (such as polling) to cut through the noise and come to an accurate understanding of public views.
4. All schemes must be **supported by local authority leaders**, who will need to provide written confirmation of the authority's long-term commitment to them. All schemes should be given sufficient time to bed in and for benefits to be realised before any changes are made to them: the Department will reserve the right to claw back funding where schemes which it has funded are prematurely removed.
5. To agree, if asked, to put larger schemes through a **design review**, to be managed by DfT and the future Active Travel England body.

Bids will be assessed in line with the following criteria, which will guide final allocations to authorities:

1. Propensity to convert short vehicle journeys into cycling and walking, resulting in carbon, air quality and congestion benefits;
2. Tackling areas with poor health outcomes and with high levels of deprivation;
3. Number of people that will benefit from the measures;
4. Compliance with the key principles above.

The bidding proforma should be completed via [Smart Survey](#). More detailed FAQs for bidding authorities are attached to this letter, along with a copy of the bid proforma. It is our intention that the bidding process should be swift and not onerous. In many cases authorities will already have proposals for LTN1/20-compliant schemes or may wish to make permanent some of the temporary schemes installed under the Emergency Active Travel Fund in the last year.

Funding can be used to support a range of scheme types and can also be used to support feasibility studies and scheme design as well as construction, providing that the funding can be capitalised. Local authorities should also consider, and take steps to mitigate, the wider impacts of any proposals, particularly on disabled people and others with protected characteristics as part of their Public Sector Equality Duty.

In applying for funding, we are asking authorities to supply the following evidence to the Department within the bid proforma:

- Updated LCWIPs (if applicable), including your latest network plans.
- Brief information on your authority's investment priorities for cycling and walking infrastructure schemes over the next 1 year, 4 years and 10 years. Only high level information is required for schemes to be delivered over the 4 and 10 year time period. This information will enable the Department to establish a clearer picture of future funding demand.
- Details of the schemes for which you are seeking funding in 2021/22, in priority order.

Applicants are also expected to assess and confirm, through their section 151 officer, the value for money of their schemes. For all schemes costing £2 million or more, the Department will require applicants to undertake a value for money assessment using the Active Mode Appraisal Tool (AMAT). Accompanying this letter, we have sent you value for money guidance to help assess your schemes which should make this process straightforward.

In the event that schemes are unable to be delivered, the authority should submit revised proposals which do offer value for money to the Department as soon as possible. Where this is not possible, the Department will reserve the right to claw back any funding by adjusting downwards a future grant payment to your authority.

The Department will also expect the impact of schemes to be monitored and evaluated. A copy of the monitoring and evaluation guidance issued with earlier tranches of funding accompanies this letter. This will be a requirement for all schemes costing £2 million or more and is recommended for other significant schemes.

### **Mini Hollands development programme**

The Department is also taking this opportunity to invite expressions of interest from authorities in the Government's Mini-Hollands development programme. Mini Hollands involve intensive, transformational spending on local roads and streetscapes to make them, over time, as cycle and pedestrian-friendly as their Dutch equivalents. This includes installation of high quality segregated cycle lanes on main roads, low-traffic neighbourhoods and high streets, and greater roadspace allocation for people walking.

The results from three Mini Holland schemes in London have shown dramatic improvements, with cycling increasing by 18 per cent and walking by 13 per cent in the first year after construction. Congestion did not rise in the longer term, because the changes allowed many people who had previously driven very short journeys to walk or cycle instead.

We are therefore looking to develop a shortlist of around 12 non-London local authority areas, to benefit from intensive investment in mini-Holland schemes on the same model. The main focus will be on replacing short car trips. Candidate authorities must be places where there is serious political commitment to dramatic change – not just for cyclists, but for everyone who lives and works there. There must also be clear plans for the mini-Holland schemes to be properly integrated into wider cycling and walking network plans (e.g. within the 4 and 10-year project pipelines).

More details on how to apply are set out in the attached FAQ guidance. Revenue funding will be made available to shortlisted authorities (up to £100k per authority) to develop detailed proposals later in the year. Longer term funding will be provided following the next multi-year Spending Review, expected later in 2021.

### **GP prescribing pilot**

We are looking for a small group of Local Authorities to take part in a pilot to provide cycling and walking interventions as part of a social prescribing offer. These pilots must be supported by the local Clinical Commissioning Groups and Primary Care Networks.

Taking up cycling is amongst the most effective health interventions a person can make: according to a recent Glasgow University study, cycling to work can contribute to a 45% lower risk of developing cancer, a 46% lower risk of heart disease and a 41% lower risk of premature death, compared to a nonactive commute.

We will develop a shortlist of up to four authorities to take part in the pilot. The Department wishes to invite local authorities with areas of poor health and low physical activity rates to express their interest via a short letter. We invite EOIs from authorities with a range of experiences in social prescribing, from more to less mature. A commitment to innovation and buy-in from key stakeholders is important.

The project will seek to deliver personalised care through approaches determined most appropriate for the identified areas. A key network for this will be link workers experienced in social prescribing in primary care networks. Pilots will prescribe cycling or walking wherever appropriate, and make available cycles, as well as training, access to cycling groups and peer support.

To support patients to feel safe to cycle in their local community, places will need to invest in infrastructure improvements such as segregated lanes, low-traffic neighbourhoods and secure cycle parking. There must also be clear plans for the prescribing pilots and related infrastructure improvements to be properly integrated into wider cycling and walking network plans. Access to good quality green space and green routes, away from traffic, can both increase attractiveness of cycling and bring mental health benefits. Such interventions could be connected to NHS campaigns in the pilot areas.

As with the mini-Hollands development programme, more details on how to apply are set out in the attached FAQ guidance. Revenue funding will be made available to shortlisted authorities (up to £100k per authority) to develop detailed proposals later in the year.

Longer term funding will be provided following the next multi-year Spending Review, expected later in 2021.

### **Further advice and guidance**

Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance (LTN 1/20) one-day training events will be available to all local and combined authorities. This training is aimed at local highway teams, active travel teams and accessibility teams and will comprise a one-day interactive course. The training will be provided from July 2021 through to January 2022 by Sustrans with support from the LCWIP consortium (Sustrans, Living Streets and Cycling UK). Courses will generally be provided for single authorities (or combined authorities) and will be for 8 to 12 places for each authority (or combined authority) per course. To register your interest please book a slot for your authority at the following Eventbrite link <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/designing-high-quality-walking-cycling-infrastructure-ltn-120-guidance-tickets-155795834535>.

We are arranging two one-hour online sessions for LAs during the early phase of the bidding window, to discuss the key requirements of the bidding process, and answer any remaining questions. These sessions will cover general bid and value for money requirements, monitoring and evaluation and guidance on consultation. Invitations for these sessions will be circulated in due course.

The Department is in the process of commissioning a number of roundtable events, where Local Authority Leaders and Cabinet Members, will have the opportunity hear from senior representatives of the Department for Transport, joined by other speakers, to discuss their experiences of implementing ambitious active travel programmes. More details on speakers, facilitators, aims, outcomes, and how to reserve a place will be circulated in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R Furness', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Rupert Furness**