

Cabinet

Date of Meeting



Report Title: DfT Access Fund revenue competition 2017/18 – 2019/20

Ward: Citywide

Strategic Director: Barra Mac Ruairi (Place)

Report Author: Colin Rees, Transport Manager

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Purpose of the report:

1. To seek approval that Bristol City Council submits a bid to the Department for Transport's Access Fund revenue competition for £6.9m (2017/18 – 2019/20) in partnership with the West of England Authorities, to provide continued funding to support and promote sustainable travel. Bristol's share of this bid would be £2.6m.

Recommendation for the Mayor's approval:

1. That Bristol City Council submits a bid to the Department for Transport's Access Fund revenue competition for £6.9m (2017/17 – 2019/20) in partnership with the West of England Authorities.
2. Should the bid be successful that Bristol City Council, through a formal legal agreement, will deliver the project in collaboration with Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils.
3. That the Service Director for Transport, in consultation with the Service Director for Legal Services and Cabinet Member for Transport, be given delegated authority to enter into a legal agreement with the Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils to proceed with the project.



The proposal:

1. Since 2011 the West of England (WoE) authorities have delivered a series of projects aimed at promoting sustainable transport and supporting economic growth. These projects have largely focused on ‘soft’ transport measures such as behaviour change initiatives (i.e. personalised travel planning), targeted marketing campaigns (i.e. ‘get around the road works’) and support services (i.e. family cycle training and match-funded grants for businesses). These schemes are funded through competitively won Department for Transport (DfT) grants. The Access Fund competition is the latest round of this funding and looks to build on the success of its predecessors; Key Component (2011-2012) The Local Sustainable Transport Fund (2012-2015); LSTF extension (2015-16); Sustainable Travel Transition Year (2016-17).
2. The DfT announced the Access Fund revenue competition (2017/18-2019/20) on the 5th July with a deadline for submission on the 9th September. The maximum bid on offer is £7.5m revenue over 3 years. The WoE plans to submit a £6.9m bid (Bristol £2.6m) with Bristol as the lead bidder.
3. The predecessor to the Access Fund (the Sustainable Travel Transition Year) currently supports 8 FTEs who are engaged in promoting sustainable transport in Bristol. The Access Fund would secure funds to cover the ongoing costs of these staff for the next 3 years.
4. The core objectives of the fund is to support the local economy by improving access to new and existing employment, education and training and to promote increased levels of physical activity through greater uptake of walking and cycling.
5. Most journeys within the WoE are local, but high levels of car use for these trips are a major cause of congestion and poor journey time reliability. Over two thirds of all journeys are under five miles, and more than half (55%) of these are made by car. A quarter of car journeys are less than two miles. These journeys, and the overall demand for transport in the City, contribute substantially to congestion and unreliability on existing networks, which in turn is a cost to the local economy.
6. The Joint Local Transport Plan objective is to promote a low carbon, accessible, integrated, health enhancing, efficient and reliable transport network. This will be achieved with more people travelling sustainably for local journeys by walking, cycling, using public transport or car sharing.
7. In 2011 the white paper ‘Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon’ recognised the role smarter travel plays in creating places people want to work and live and explained how changes to local transport could cut carbon emissions and create local growth. This aligns with our Local Transport Plan objectives. The government launched the Local Sustainable Transport Fund in 2011. From this the WoE authorities have benefited from a £29M grant programme which has delivered walking and cycling infrastructure, support to schools and businesses and, in particular, focused on supporting people to switch to sustainable modes of travel at a key life-transition point.
8. Bristol City Council has led the way nationally over the last fifteen years in the delivery of smarter travel initiatives - interventions that prompt us to think about how and why we make transport

choices, challenging us to consider the impact our travel decisions have on others and on ourselves. Daily travel behaviours, in particular mode of choice, are seen as a habitual.

9. The funding will deliver a wide range of schemes including community, schools and business engagement activity. Some specific examples include support for family cycle training; school travel plans and match-funded grants for businesses to install onsite sustainable transport facilities. In terms of promoting walking, the focus is on investing in initiatives that encourage schoolchildren to walk to school as well as providing information and support to employees and community groups to encourage walking for both commuting and leisure purposes. The scheme will also link in with the employer Workplace Well-Being Charter initiative making the connection between public health and transport.
10. The funding is also critical in maintaining levels of marketing/communications support for projects such as MetroBus, MetroWest and Cycling Ambition Fund 2. An element of this funding will be used to launch the MetroBus operation in the West of England in 2017, and to provide good quality information at MetroBus stops.
11. Not securing funding would be a significant blow at a time when the city is seeing unprecedented levels of capital investment to improve the transport network – the Access Fund seeks to link with this investment to break non-essential, car dominated travel patterns.

Consultation and scrutiny input:

a. Internal consultation:

Extensive consultation was carried out as part of the Sustainable Travel Transition Year and Local Sustainable Transport Fund programmes. Detailed consultation has taken place with all relevant officers within the Transport Service and across the Council in developing the bid for the Access Fund.

b. External consultation:

The delivery of the predecessors to the Access Fund (The Sustainable Travel Transition Year and Local Sustainable Transport Fund) were an ongoing collaborative approach delivered in partnership with stakeholders such as businesses, schools, universities, job centres and community groups. Throughout the delivery of both of these projects we have reviewed what has worked well and listened to stakeholders to inform the Access Fund bid. We have consulted with and received letters of support from Business West, North Bristol SusCom, SevernNet and the Local Enterprise Partnership as well as from employers, communities and educational institutions.

Other options considered:

The only alternative option identified is for revenue funding to be provided directly by the Council, however the Council's revenue budget is under pressure and it would be challenging to identify additional resource to fund the ongoing support and promotion of sustainable transport.

The Access Fund competition is a vital source of revenue funding and currently supports 8FTE members of staff. The funding sought is from a DfT grant and as such there are no clear alternatives, i.e. equivalent funding mechanisms.

Risk management / assessment:

FIGURE 1

The risks associated with the implementation of the (subject) decision :

No.	RISK Threat to achievement of the key objectives of the report	INHERENT RISK (Before controls)		Mitigation (ie controls) and Evaluation (ie effectiveness of mitigation).	CURRENT RISK (After controls)		RISK OWNER
		Impact	Probability		Impact	Probability	
1	Insufficient authority or partner delivery resource	High	Medium	Accept: Build on the well-established delivery teams For the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and Sustainable Travel Transition Year Fund projects. Ensure realistic Project Plans that are signed off by Programme Board. Reduce: Ensure sufficient resources are identified and available to progress delivery. Reduce: Early arrangements for continuation of commencement of partnering arrangements.	Medium	Low	SRO/PM
2	Schemes in the Access Fund do not deliver projected outcomes	High	Medium	Avoid: Ensure project outcomes are well defined and reflected in Evaluation Plan. Reduce: Review projects through established outputs and outcomes reports to identify improvements to delivery. Accept: Programme and change management process to have agreed scheme benefits.	Medium	Low	SRO/PM
3	Impact on reputation from poor project delivery or outcomes	High	Medium	Reduce: Establish robust governance and programme/project management arrangements. Avoid: Regular liaison and progress reporting to DfT to ensure expectations met.	Medium	Medium	SRO/PM

FIGURE 2

The risks associated with not implementing the (subject) decision:

No.	RISK	INHERENT RISK (Before controls)		RISK CONTROL MEASURES	CURRENT RISK (After controls)		RISK OWNER
		Impact	Probability		Impact	Probability	

	Threat to achievement of the key	Impact	Probability	Mitigation (ie controls) and	Impact	Probability	
1	Loss of team members and resources to effectively promote sustainable travel across the city and the subsequent negative impact on congestion, air quality, carbon emissions and cost to the Health Service through lower levels of physical activity	High	High	Evaluate how activities that would have been funded through the Access Fund grant could be incorporated into the Transport Service's business as usual operations whilst managing a reduced budget.	High	High	Transport Service
2	Reputational risk for not bidding to the DfT's Access Fund	High	High	Demonstrate commitment to promoting sustainable transport by competing for future funding opportunities.	High	High	Transport Service
3	Impact on relationship with neighbouring authorities who are committed to bidding to the Access Fund	High	High	Evaluate how Bristol could support a bid developed by the other councils.	High	High	Transport Service

Equalities Impact Assessment

The Access West Equality and Diversity Action Plan will prioritise specific actions which need to be addressed to ensure people with protected characteristics benefit from the sustainable travel projects. In respect of equality and diversity, central principles relating to the Access West project are:

- Ensuring accessible sustainable travel modes are in place;
- Encouraging more cycling and walking by those who are already more likely to use these methods (e.g. Males);
- Encouraging those who are less likely to use these methods to participate (e.g. Females).

The action plan prioritises:

- Women and older people will benefit from improved cycling infrastructure through bicycle paths and lanes that provide a high degree of separation from motor traffic. Design principles and good management can address conflicts that can occur within shared spaces (e.g. cyclists and pedestrians). This is important information in respect of promotion for disabled people and both younger and older people.
- Children and young people will benefit from cycle training, which is valuable in terms of cycling safety skills, and promoting cycling to school
- Older people will benefit from age-targeted cycling skills courses, encouragement for Bicycle User Groups to reach out to older people, widespread availability of cycling maps, advertising the multiple benefits of cycling and continued improvement to cycle paths.

Disabled people will benefit from promoting facilities and options which are suitable for a wide range of impairment types; these include hand cycles, trikes, wheelchair friendly cycles, side-by-side cycles, one up one down cycles, recumbent, tandems and steer from rear tandems

Advice given by **Anne James, Equality and Community Cohesion**
Date **01/08/16**

Eco impact assessment

In the short and medium term the project's impacts will include staff travel and use of energy in offices, however, these are not significant due to the small number of staff involved. No additional mitigation measures are proposed, since staff have existing access to low and zero emission pool vehicles, e-bikes, and cycling facilities.

The proposal is considered to have long-term positive impacts: promotion of sustainable transport providing for a reduction in car journeys and associated emissions of greenhouse gases and harmful pollutants. The resilience of the city to travel disruption and variability of fuel security and costs will be increased. Staff will work with the Strategic Resilience Officer and air quality Project Officers to enhance the opportunities to improve the city's resilience and air quality.

Although it is not directly environmental, it is noted that there is significant scope for health benefits from improving air quality and encouraging more active forms of travel, so it is also suggested that staff work with the Public Health team to enhance these opportunities.

The net effects of the proposals are positive.

Advice given by Giles Liddell and Steve Ransom, Environment Project Managers
Date 01/08/16

Resource and legal implications:

Finance

a. Financial (revenue) implications:

This bid is for revenue funding to allow Bristol City Council to maintain its efforts in achieving sustainable transport by promoting low carbon, accessible, integrated, efficient and reliable transport networks within the context of the current JTP agreement between the West of England Authorities.

This revenue grant from the DFT is for 2017/18 – 2019/20 only and for a total of £6.9m, Bristol City Council's share of this being £2.6m, BANES £1.0m, NSC £1.3m and SGC £1.7m, Metrobus £300k

Bristol City Council is the accountable body for the claim overall.

The s151 Officer for Bristol City Council will need to sign off the claim for funds on behalf of the West of England Councils at the end of August and, as part of this process an extensive document will be delivered by finance and transport colleagues to provide an evidence trail for:

- Sufficient budget allocated to deliver the scheme
- The match funding required by each Local Authority, and
- All necessary governance and assurance arrangements in place

The evidence will demonstrate that the match funding requirement of at least 10% of DfT is guaranteed. This match funding is a condition of the grant and capital funding is eligible. Bristol's commitment will be for its share of £2.6m, hence a match of £260k over three accounting periods.

Transport Team is currently reviewing its plans for these years and will have identified where this match will be found before accepting any such grant and associated conditions.

Advice given by **Mike Allen / Finance Business Partner**
Date **28/07/16**

b. Financial (capital) implications:

This is a revenue grant and has no capital implications for the council.

Advice given by **Mike Allen / Finance Business Partner**
Date **28/07/16**

Comments from the Corporate Capital Programme Board:

N/A - funding is for revenue only measures

c. Legal implications:

The existing agreement between the four Unitary Authorities dated 19th November 2012 would need to be amended to allow for an extension to the implementation of the Access Fund programme for the further period. Other than this there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Advice given by **Pauline Powell, Team Leader, Transport Planning and Regulatory Law**
Date **01/08/16**

d. Land / property implications:

There are no Land/Property implications contained within the Access Fund. The funding is for revenue only and does not involve procuring or building on land/property within Bristol.

Advice given by **Robert Orrett, Service Director, Property**
Date **04/08/16**

e. Human resources implications:

The Access Fund will be delivered through Sustainable Transport's existing staffing establishment.

Advice given by **Mark Williams, People Business Partner**
Date **05/08/16**

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Access Fund equalities note
Appendix 2 – Access Fund EQIA relevance check note
Appendix 3 – Access Fund Eco Impact Assessment

Access to information (background papers):

1. Department for Transport Access Fund bidding Guidance and Application Form:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-fund-for-sustainable-travel-application-form>