

North Yorkshire County Council

Local Access Forum

29 September 2021

Active Travel in North Yorkshire

Report of the Corporate Director – Business & Environmental Services

1.0 Purpose of Report:

- 1.1. To provide a highways update to Members of the Local Access Forum, with a focus on the delivery of active travel projects across North Yorkshire.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Walking and cycling are the cheapest, healthiest and least polluting forms of travel. Most journeys involve some element of walking, whether it is a walk from home to work, walking to the bus stop or even walking from the car park to the shops. Good walking and cycling links to public transport facilities can integrate different transport modes and further encourage sustainable travel and ultimately reduce car use.
- 2.2 For many people, cycling is also a healthy and environmentally friendly mode of travel. Compared to walking, the extra speed of cycling makes longer trips feasible and can offer a suitable means of travel for those who cannot or choose not to drive (e.g. children and those on low incomes). Providing for and encouraging more walking and cycling as an alternative to driving can also make a significant contribution to boosting social inclusion and to reducing congestion and its environmental and economic impacts.
- 2.3 The County Council is therefore committed to continuing to provide for and promote walking and cycling as a mode of travel for 'utility' trips to access local services.

3.0 Active Travel Fund

- 3.1 In February 2020 the Department for Transport (DfT) announced that it would be committing £5bn to walking, cycling and public transport over a period of 5 years. The funding was split into two pots, £2bn for walking and cycling and £3bn for public transport.
- 3.2 Following the Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020, the DfT made some of this funding available through the Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) to provide temporary infrastructure to aid social distancing. As a result, schemes were rolled out across the country.
- 3.3 In Tranche 1, the total indicative allocation from the DfT to North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) was £266,000, but only 50% funding was awarded following their assessment of our Tranche 1 bid. The County Council added match funding of £133,000 to complete all of the schemes set out in the Tranche 1 bid given the importance of the proposed measures to the Covid-19 recovery strategy.

- 3.4 Further, the DfT announced a second round of funding known as the Active Travel Fund (ATF). The fund was renamed with the removal of the word ‘emergency’ due to the longer timescales involved in approving the fund and for the subsequent delivery. Active Travel funding is available to spend in 2021/22, and is intended to enhance streets, while providing space to enable non-motorised users to observe social distancing.
- 3.5 Tranche 2 funding is to be used to support both temporary, low-cost schemes, and permanent schemes with a short lead-time, so long as they meet the criteria outlined below.
- Can it be delivered in 20/21? (this subsequently changed to 21/22 because of a delay in announcing the funding allocations)
 - Does it replace a well-used bus route?
 - Does it provide a segregated cycle /pedestrian route or close roads to traffic?
 - Does it cater for BOTH cycling AND walking?
 - Can it be delivered for less than our indicative allocation of £1.065m?
- 3.6 This was a challenging set of criteria and a significant number of potential schemes had to be ruled out because of deliverability or cost. The schemes put forward to be funded were those that best fit the EATF criteria.
- 3.7 NYCC made an ambitious bid for £1.465m of funding for five schemes, requesting more than our £1.065m indicative allocation, after assessing 300 schemes across the county, including some received from the public, interest groups and county councillors. The final amount awarded to NYCC was £1,011,750, which was only £53k less than our indicative allocation or 95%. The letter from the DfT set out that the amount awarded is split 80/20 between capital and revenue; £809,400 capital, £202,350 revenue.
- 3.8 The schemes in the Tranche 2 bid were:
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| • Oatlands Drive, Harrogate | £215k |
| • A59 (Maple Close, Harrogate to Knaresborough) | £250k |
| • Victoria Avenue, Harrogate | £250k |
| • Guisborough Road. Whitby | £250k |
| • Market Place, Helmsley to Kirkdale Lane | £500k |
- 3.9 Following a report to the BES Corporate Director and BES Executive Members on 8th December 2020, the route from Helmsley to Kirkdale Lane was removed as it was an additional scheme, which was over and above the allocation. This left four remaining schemes to be taken forward to consultation.
- 3.10 Two phases of consultation were carried out in February and March 2021 and following some public opposition to the proposed Oatlands Drive scheme it was removed from the programme for delivery in 2021/22 and instead more detailed feasibility work will be carried out into the options available for this area. The remaining three schemes will be delivered by March 2022.
- 3.11 A further round of the Active Travel Fund was announced in mid-June 2021 with bid submissions submitted in early August 2021. Following input from stakeholders and analysis of potential schemes against the tranche 3 criteria the following capital schemes have been identified as appropriate to take forward:

Scheme name	Description	Cost
Kildwick to Silsden + Airedale	<p>Proposal to improve a 3km stretch of towpath (1km in Bradford, 2km in North Yorkshire/ Craven) between Kildwick and Silsden. This funding will cover the construction of the NYCC section.</p> <p>This scheme is ready for construction subject to funding. The scheme would be led by Canals and Rivers Trust, using their project managers. The scheme will improve access to recreation for leisure and health purposes.</p> <p>In Airedale we will deliver enhancements to aid accessibility to the Kildwick to Silsden link. The improvements include Improved connectivity from Cross Hills to towpath (at Priest Bank Road), including widening of the pedestrian underpass under roundabout and provision of ramped access onto canal at Cononley Lane End / A629.</p>	£800k + £100k
Ripon West Sustainable Travel Corridors	Delivery of features to reduce design speeds to encourage trips by active modes in the Clothholme Road / Kirby Road area of Ripon. This scheme would have benefits for a number of schools in the area and also provide access to the town centre from residential areas and any future developments in the area. Measures could include footway-widening, provision of crossing facilities and traffic calming measures (including speed reduction).	£550k
Helmsley Marketplace to Kirkbymoorside	This would be used as development funding to undertake feasibility work for a fully segregated foot/cycleway between Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside alongside the busy A170 to enhance access to employment and facilities for residents, tourists and workers.	£50k
Knaresborough to Flaxby Green Park Industrial Site	This would be used as development funding to undertake feasibility work for a fully segregated foot/cycleway (approximately 7km long) between Knaresborough and Flaxby Green Park alongside the rail line to provide access to key employment and residential sites along the route. Links to wider plans to deliver a cohesive route to York.	£50k
Brayton to Selby route	Brayton to Selby Corridor was included in the Phase 2 Selby LCWIP to the outline design stage. We will develop this work to detailed design stage. The corridor features a direct radial route connecting Brayton to both Selby town centre and the rail station. The route encompasses prestige and primary walking/cycling routes (as defined in the Selby LCWIP) and the central location of the corridor means many trips will either end within or make use of any associated interventions. This corridor connects potential growth sites and links existing key employers and education facilities, a hospital and shopping destinations as well as the rail and bus stations, maximizing permeability into the town centre, whilst aligning with district aspirations. This scheme directly links to the existing Transforming Cities Fund project and will encourage new trips from a new residential development.	£95k
	Total	£1.645M

- 3.12 In Tranche 3 there is a total of £239m capital funding available to all Local Authorities across the UK. NYCC has not been given an indicative allocation for this round of funding but authorities have been told to expect a similar level of funding to that received in 2020/2021. Our indicative allocation was £1,331,000 for Tranches 1 and 2 combined. The funding announcement is expected in autumn and our allocation must be spent before March 2023.
- 3.13 Furthermore the Government is looking to partner with four Local Authorities, in the UK, which have areas of poor health and low physical activity rates to take part in a pilot to provide cycling and walking interventions as part of a social prescribing offer (pilots must be supported by the local Clinical Commissioning Groups and Primary Care Networks).
- 3.14 NYCC has submitted an Expression of Interest to take part in this pilot project.

4.0 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

- 4.1 In 2017, the government released its first Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, which outlines the government's ambition to make cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) were identified in the strategy as a new strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements at a local level. The LCWIP is designed to facilitate a long term approach to developing networks, but also designed so that the document can be updated and revisited throughout the 10 year period of its lifespan.
- 4.2 The key outputs of an LCWIP are:
- A cycle and walking network plan identifying preferred routes
 - A prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements of future investment
 - A report setting out the narrative behind the prioritisation of routes
- 4.3 NYCC intends to develop and adopt an LCWIP for each of the principal towns in the county. The aim of these is to identify the main cycle and walking improvements in a town to enable the county council to bid for government funding and/or to secure funding contributions from developers.
- 4.4 At the present time the following LCWIPs have been developed or are in the process of being developed:
- Harrogate and Knaresborough
 - Scarborough
 - Skipton
 - Selby, Tadcaster and Sherburn in Elmet (in partnership with Selby district council)
 - Malton and Norton (in progress)
 - Northallerton
 - Catterick and Catterick Garrison (to be commissioned in 21/22)
 - Ripon (funded through developer S106 contributions)
- 4.5 There is no direct funding available to deliver the LCWIP priorities but It is becoming increasingly clear that the DfT expect Local Authorities to be developing them and that future funding pots will be available for schemes that have been identified through this process. Additionally, having the LCWIP in place with network plans for each area allows NYCC to be in a much better position to request S106 funding from developers towards new infrastructure.

5.0 Capability Fund

- 5.1 On the 3 March 2021 the Department for Transport (DfT) notified all Combined and Local transport authorities of their indicative revenue funding allocations for 2021/22 under the new one year Local Authority Capability Fund with NYCC receiving an allocation of £207,683.
- 5.2 The Local Authority Capability Fund replaces the Access Fund, previously offered to a subset of authorities. It supports the commitment made in Gear Change, the Prime Minister's Cycling and Walking Plan in July 2020, to increase the capabilities of local authorities to plan good active travel infrastructure, including building more expertise and undertaking more evidence-based planning.
- 5.3 LCWIP Review and Update
- 5.3.1 The following LCWIP Phase 2 documents were produced pre-Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20, the most recent cycle infrastructure guidance (see Section 6 below). To ensure that the designs comply with current guidance review and updates are required as follows:
- Scarborough LCWIP – designs have been produced for four corridors. These will require review against LTN and potential updating.
 - Selby District LCWIP – designs have been produced for five corridors in Selby and one in Sherburn. These will require review against LTN and potential updating.
 - Harrogate CIP – designs have been produced for four corridors. The proposals in HCIP assumed a reduction in motor vehicle traffic due to delivery of the Harrogate Relief Road. When the Relief Road option was rejected following public consultation, we undertook a review of the appropriateness of the designs as part of the HTIP workstream (Oct 2020) to assess whether they could cater for the resultant traffic growth. This covers off most of the review, but the designs will require updating to ensure LTN compliance.
- 5.3.2 The budget for this element is £30,000
- 5.4 Bikeability Training for School Pupils
- 5.4.1 The DfT has very recently invited NYCC to accept a one year contract for 2021/22 with a grant offer of £168,165 to provide up to 3637 places. The DfT grant contribution per pupil trained is increased to £45 per place.
- 5.4.2 Delivery costs in 2021/22 for 3637 places will be approximately £247,300, leaving a shortfall of £79,000. This figure includes increased salary costs, following the pay award in August 2020.
- 5.4.3 For the programme to continue, funding will be required to meet the shortfall, either through a full charging scheme or another source.
- 5.4.4 It was agreed at the BES Exec Members meeting in March that the current delivery model is continued and the funding shortfall be met with a BES contribution of £43,000 together with fee charges of £10 per place, producing income of approximately £36,000. It is suggested that the fees that were intended to be met by schools are now covered by the Capability Fund.
- 5.4.5 The budget for this element is £36,000
- 5.5 Travel Plan development, review and delivery and marketing and communication

- 5.5.1 It has been recognised that more could be done to develop, review and deliver travel plans related to developments across the County. It is suggested that the Capability fund is used to pay for two full time Sustainable Transport Officers (STOs) to be based within the Road Safety team. The STOs would:
- i. Work with developers at application stage to embed sustainable and active travel ethos into design and build.
 - ii. Review TP at application stage and monitor existing travel plans.
 - iii. Promote sustainable and active travel.
 - iv. Promote school and business Modeshift Travel Plans.
- 5.5.2 This package will also include continuing the active travel communications and marketing through the Open North Yorkshire brand. This will include travel information packs, residential engagement/travel surveys and online/outdoor/radio promotion.
- 5.5.3 The budget for this element is £141,683. This is made up of:
- £96,000 – 2 x Sustainable Travel Officers (including on-costs)
 - £3000 – Membership to Modeshift Stars travel planning tool
 - £42,683 – Active Travel Marketing and promotion
- 5.5.4 NYCC were successful in bidding for the full allocation of Capability funding and delivery of the various elements is starting in September.

6.0 LTN 1/20

- 6.1 Local Transport Note 1/20 replaced LTN 2/08 and LTN 1/12 (Shared Use) in July 2020.
- 6.2 The latest Local Transport Note (LTN 1/20) provides guidance on delivering high quality cycle infrastructure. Underpinned by 22 summary principles, Local Authorities and developers are now expected to use LTN 1/20 in the design of their schemes, regardless of whether they are seeking Government funding. Those schemes seeking funding which do not follow this guidance will not be funded. A new inspectorate, Active Travel England will enforce these new standards as well as grading Highways Authorities on their active travel performance, in respect of sustainable travel outcomes. This assessment will be considered when allocating funding for future local transport schemes.
- 6.3 Key principles:
- Cyclists must be separated from volume traffic, both at junctions and on the stretches of road between them;
 - Cyclists must be separated from pedestrians;
 - Cyclists must be treated as vehicles, not pedestrians;
 - Routes must join together; isolated stretches of good provision are of little value;
 - Routes must be direct, logical and be intuitively understandable by all road users;
 - Routes and schemes must take account of how users actually behave;
 - Purely cosmetic alterations should be avoided;
 - Barriers, such as chicane barriers and dismount signs, should be avoided;
 - Routes should be designed only by those who have experienced the road on a cycle.
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- 6.4 Important changes from LTN 2/08:

- For the first time ever DfT has firmly set out what is considered acceptable for direct government funding.
- There is no longer a 'hierarchy of provision' as there was in LTN 2/08, instead there is a very clear message about the reallocation of highway space. This should not be at the expense of pedestrian space or comfort, and cycle traffic should be separated from motor traffic in high speed/volume situations.
- Cycle traffic should be separated at junctions, using dedicated space or signal time.
- There is a presumption of inclusive design – a strong emphasis throughout the document that we need to consider young people, older people and disabled people using a variety of cycles and trailers.
- Only schemes with a minimum score of 70% under the Cycling Level of Service (CLoS) tool, no critical fails and under the Junction Assessment Tool (JAT) no red scored turning movements will generally be considered for funding.

7.0 Developer Design Guide

- 7.1 North Yorkshire County Council, in its capacity as Local Highway Authority (LHA), is statutory consultee to the planning process on highways matters.
- 7.2 Following planning approval, NYCC works with developers (charging a superintendence fee for the service, as a percentage of the total calculated bond value for highway works), to ensure that roads are designed and constructed to a standard which enables it to confidently adopt the new infrastructure and accept it as highway maintainable at the public expense.
- 7.3 It is critical to this process that the advice given by the LHA when undertaking its duties as statutory consultee to the planning process is impartial, being technical in nature and involving a consideration of the evidence provided by developers to the local planning authority (LPA), in line with national and local guidance, to enable the LHA's substantive response.
- 7.4 The technical advice given by NYCC officers is free from political opinion. This is vital to ensure that colleagues from LPAs who base their reports on NYCC recommendations are assured that the NYCC position is robust, and would stand up to any challenge at appeal.
- 7.5 It Therefore, NYCC guidance and specification must be based on current best practice and permit advice to be consistently offered to LPAs across the county area.
- 7.6 The present NYCC guidance was last reviewed in 1994. In recent years, there have been significant changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Work to review NYCC guidance, to ensure that responses and recommendations issued by NYCC in its capacity as LHA are reasonable and in line with current planning practice and legislation is presently underway.
- 7.7 At the time of writing, existing NYCC Highway Design Guidance is being reviewed. The review will be based on the existing national highway design guidance, given by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and also the newer document Manual for Streets, which was not in existence when the last full review of the NYCC guidance was undertaken. It has however become an integral part of residential design since its introduction in 2007, (its stipulations having instead been incorporated through additional interim guidance notes and a matrix stipulating when the use is appropriate).

- 7.8 Work to refresh the design guidance has been progressing for some time with the majority of chapters now drafted. During the time of drafting however a national refresh of the Manual for Streets has commenced. Consequently many of the draft chapters are being revisited before being shared more widely with interested parties in order for any significant amendments to be incorporated to the new guidance prior to publication.
- 7.9 There are chapters however that will be largely unaffected by the manual for Streets review, these are continuing to be progressed and will be published as stand-alone design notes following engagement with LPAs and subsequent consideration by BES Executive Members. These chapters are those concerning Drainage, Streetworks processes for developers and Commuted Sums.
- 7.10 NYCC is also updating its specification and standard details documents, to accompany this work.
- 7.11 It is currently planned to take the chapters on Drainage, Streetworks and Commuted Sums to the November meeting of BES Executive Members subject to satisfactory completion of the engagement process with LPAs and other relevant stakeholders.
- 7.12 Chapters where NYCC design guidance will have an impact on accessibility and movement will be circulated to the LAF for comment. Similarly standard details will be shared and comments invited. This will be after the review of the Manual for Streets.

8.0 Local Access Forum Engagement

- 8.1 In addition to the engagement described in 7.12 Network Strategy teams are keen to engage with the LAF on projects that would be of relevance to the group. For example, the Transport Planning team will continue to contact the LAF to discuss LCWIPs and there will be an opportunity for the group to comment on the Catterick LCWIP when it gets underway in the next few months.
- 8.2 Where timescales do not fit in with the normal meeting calendar of the LAF we will contact the chair via the NYCC Democratic Services to gather views.

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 Walking and cycling are increasingly becoming the focus of DfT funding pots and with a number of LCWIPs in place or in development NYCC will be in a good position to access this funding. With a strong national focus on decarbonisation and the move away from traditional petrol / diesel vehicles, walking and cycling will also play a part in removing short trips from the highway network.

10.0 Recommendations

- 10.1 That Members of the Local Access Forum note the delivery of active travel schemes across North Yorkshire and the desire to engage with the Forum on matters of interest to them.

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