
OPPORTUNITY TO BID TO LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio

Responsible Director – Richard Alty, Director of Economic Growth

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for an application to the Department for Transport Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which is being made available through a competitive bidding process.

Summary

2. In late December the Department for Transport (DfT) announced the opportunity for local authorities to bid to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) for funding to be used to promote the use of sustainable transport.
3. LSTF applications must be primarily for revenue funding, though can use capital expenditure from other funding sources as part of the necessary match funding. The deadline for bids is 31 March 2014.
4. Bids can be made by individual local authorities, or by a consortium of local authorities, for example in a Local Economic Partnership area.
5. Bids must not exceed £1M per authority and require a minimum of 30% match funds, if including capital expenditure, or 10% match if revenue expenditure only.
6. DfT funds secured from this round of LSTF grant must be spent between April 2015 and March 2016.
7. It is considered that a joint bid would score highly in terms of delivering against transport objectives within the Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan. Council Officers have been in discussion with colleagues in the Tees Valley and are in the process of developing a proposed joint bid to the LSTF.

8. Therefore the intention is to submit a Tees Valley LSTF proposal to deliver the following types of measure:
 - (a) Improvements to and promotion of sustainable travel options for intra-urban trips. For example this could include investment in marketing bus and rail travel options linking Darlington to Stockton and Middlesbrough, coupled with public and private investment in improving the journey experience.
 - (b) Improvements to and promotion of sustainable travel for local trips with an emphasis on the health benefits of walking and cycling.
9. Work on a Tees Valley LSTF bid does not preclude Darlington submitting an individual application should that become the best course of action.

Recommendation

10. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Cabinet agree to the submission of a bid to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, either in partnership as part of consortium of Tees Valley local authorities, or as a single bidding local authority.
 - (b) Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Economic Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio holder for Transport, to agree the detailed elements of the funding bid prior to submission to the Department for Transport.

Reasons

11. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) Darlington has a strong track record and high national profile on the delivery of sustainable transport initiatives, and is therefore well placed to secure LSTF grant.
 - (b) Encouraging sustainable travel requires a long term programme of marketing and influencing measures combined with improvements to sustainable transport infrastructure. Darlington's current LSTF grant funding comes to an end in March 2015, the award of a further grant would enable work on promoting sustainable travel to continue in 2015/16.
 - (c) Encouraging sustainable travel and therefore reducing the number trips by car, is an important element of the Councils Transport Strategy to maintain a reliable and efficient transport network, to reduce carbon emissions from transport and to contribute to people living healthy and active lives.
 - (d) There is a short timescale in which to develop and agree an LSTF bid.

Richard Alty, Director of Economic Growth

Background Papers

DfT guidance on the LSTF application.

S17 Crime and Disorder	No impact
Health and Well Being	Encouraging active travel has positive impacts on the health and wellbeing of citizens.
Sustainability	Encouraging sustainable travel has positive impacts on the Environment, reducing traffic congestion, carbon and other transport related emissions.
Diversity	Planning for the delivery of LSTF funded projects will take into consideration the needs of all members of the community.
Wards Affected	All Wards
Groups Affected	No impact on particular groups.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	Not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	None urgent
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	N/A
Efficiency	A successful LSTF bid would enable the Council to continue and build upon work to promote sustainable travel. An integral part of the Council's Strategy to deliver an effective Transport system, thereby contributing to the One Darlington and Perfectly Placed priorities.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

12. In late December the Department for Transport (DfT) announced the opportunity for local authorities to bid to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) for funding to be used to promote the use of sustainable transport.
13. LSTF applications must be primarily for revenue funding, though can use capital expenditure from other funding sources as part of the necessary match funding. The deadline for bids is 31st March 2014.
14. Bids can be made by individual local authorities, or by a consortium of local authorities, for example in a Local Economic Partnership area.
15. Bids must not exceed £1M per authority and require a minimum of 30% match funds, if including capital expenditure, or 10% match if revenue expenditure only.
16. Sources of match funding could be from capital schemes funded through the integrated transport block, funding from the Local Growth Fund, from other public funds (e.g. Health), European funding or the private sector.

17. Guidance on the bid indicates that a financial contribution from the private sector will be looked upon very favourably, in Darlington there is an opportunity to consider utilising as part of the match funding, a financial contribution secured for sustainable transport from the housing development taking place at Lingfield Point.
18. DfT funds secured from this round of LSTF grant must be spent between April 2015 and March 2016, though match funding can include expenditure after March 2016.
19. As it is primarily revenue funding LSTF grant would be used to maximise the impact of capital expenditure on improving the public realm and travel for users of sustainable transport.
20. Support for the bid from the Tees Valley Local Economic Partnership is essential to its success and it is considered that a joint bid would score highly in terms of delivering against the transport and economic objectives within the Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan. Council Officers have been in discussion with colleagues in the Tees Valley and are in the process of developing a proposed joint bid to the LSTF. It is our intention that Darlington would be the lead authority in preparing the LSTF application.
21. If a joint Tees Valley bid were successful, the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements (TVBNI) programme provides a suitable model for the management of a Tees Valley LSTF funded programme.
22. Work on a Tees Valley LSTF bid does not preclude Darlington submitting an individual application should that be considered the best course of action.
23. It is proposed that the LSTF bid is based around three core packages of activity encouraging sustainable travel , these are:
 - (a) Inter – urban trips, focusing measures on infrastructure and service improvements on key travel corridors, particularly for travel to work and a education.
 - (b) Local trips, focusing on local journeys within urban areas.
 - (c) Marketing and communications, including individualised travel marketing, web and literature based materials, and work within schools.

Financial Implications

24. The detail of the proposed LSTF application is still to be determined, based on experience of previous sustainable travel programmes, it is anticipated that we will bid for between £250K-£300K grant per local authority.
25. For Darlington, based on indicative allocations of integrated transport block funding, bids to the Local Growth Fund and European Structural Investment Fund, plus private sector funding available from the development at Lingfield Point, there will be no difficulty in demonstrating as a minimum the 30% of match funding. That is £75K-£90K.

26. It should be noted that the funding is available for one year only and that any funding secured will need to be spent during the financial year 2015/16 but match funding may be spent after 31 March 2016.

Legal Implications

27. Should a joint Tees Valley LSTF bid be successful one of the Tees Valley local authorities will manage the LSTF grant funds, on behalf of all the authorities. Consequently, there would be a need to identify a lead authority and establish governance arrangements and legal agreements to implement a single Tees Valley LSTF Programme.

Risk Assessment

28. The LSTF bid is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

Sustainable Community Strategy Implications

29. Delivery of LSTF grant funded activities will have a positive impact on delivering an effective transport system, reducing congestion, improving accessibility to employment, education and other services, thereby supporting the delivery of Economic Regeneration and Transport objectives.
30. It will also have a positive impact on reducing carbon emissions, impacting positively on the environment.
31. Through encouraging active travel across all age groups an LSTF grant funded programme would have positive impacts on the health and wellbeing of the community.