

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	25 th June 2014	AGENDA ITEM:	19
TITLE:	LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND UPDATE		
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Sub-Committee on progress with delivery of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) Small Package, for which £4.9m funding was approved by the Department for Transport (DfT) in July 2011 and the LSTF Large Partnership Package, for which £20.692m funding was approved by the DfT in June 2012.
- 1.2 Detailed decisions are mainly delegated to the Steering Group level in consultation with the Lead Member for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport. The Steering Group comprises corporate and transport officers and representatives from the Public Health team and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This report includes records of recent decisions made by the Steering Group for the Sub-Committee to note.
- 1.3 This report provides an update on each of the five delivery themes of the LSTF programme, with particular focus on projects that have reached milestones within the last three months.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Sub-Committee is asked to note:

- 2.1 The progress made on the Local Sustainable Transport Fund Projects to date and that officers continue to deliver this programme and report progress to this Sub-Committee.
- 2.2 The launch of Readybike.
- 2.3 That progress is noted on the Local Sustainable Transport Fund programme.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The LSTF is a £560m fund made available by the DfT with the aim of implementing local sustainable transport measures that will deliver lasting benefits to support the local economy and reduce carbon.
- 3.2 Reading successfully secured £4.9m funding in July 2011 for a LSTF Small Project to deliver a package of transport investment measures which are complementary to those already being progressed through the core Local Transport Plan (LTP) implementation programme. The package is also complementary to key planning documents including the Core Strategy, Reading Central Area Action Plan and Reading Station Area Framework.
- 3.3 In partnership with Wokingham Borough Council, West Berkshire Council, the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the NHS Berkshire West Primary Care Trust (public health function now located within the Local Authority), Reading secured a further £20.692m for an LSTF Large Project in June 2012 to deliver a package of transport investment measures to benefit the wider urban area.
- 3.4 The DfT issued guidance on bidding for LSTF revenue funds for 2015/16 in late December 2013. Any authority can bid for this funding, whether they have current LSTF funds or not. Reading Borough submitted a bid focusing on neighbourhood-based active travel interventions and developing more interactive online resources.
- 3.5 The Annual Outputs Survey Form has been launched by the DfT. The form differs from previous years in requesting key outputs reported in numerical form for the entire LSTF programme thus far as indicators of progress and the achievements of the LSTF, as well as outputs by delivery theme in year (as previously). The Outputs reporting is due 27 June 2014. As a recipient of a 'large' award, Reading Borough will also be required to produce and submit an Outcomes Report, but it has been agreed that the next such report will be submitted in November 2014.

4. PROGRAMME PROGRESS

- 4.1 The five delivery themes of the complete LSTF Package are Personalised Travel Planning; Fares, Ticketing and Information; Cycle Hire; Active Travel; and Park and Ride/Rail. Over 25 projects have been identified within these themes, as set out in the bid and since further developed. Substantial progress has been made on many of these projects to date and others are reaching significant milestones shortly. A summary of progress by delivery theme is outlined below.
- 4.2 **Personal Travel Planning:** The Travel Advisors held events at Reading Borough Council and offered advice to employees, as well as offering advice to other companies around Reading, including Cisco, Microsoft and Regus Group.
- 4.3 **Fares, Ticketing and Information:** Open Data Server (ODS) development works completed, testing of the system is currently being undertaken. A contractor has been appointed for Phase 1 of the signal upgrades, whilst procurement for Phase 2 is underway. Implementation of Phase 1 has been programmed between July and December with Phase 2 scheduled to be undertaken in similar timescales and

to complete in January 2015. Installation of the Bluetooth journey time monitoring system is due to complete by the end of July after which a period of data validation will be undertaken to produce live journey times for all key corridors of the urban area

- 4.4 A second round Challenge Fund was advertised for 2014/15 with 19 applications received, for grants totalling £317k. The applications included a range of projects looking at a variety of modes (although half were cycling based). There were quite a number of bids for smaller amounts of funding and a number were submitted by local charities and community groups. Grants have been awarded to 11 organisations for projects worth £159k. One project will address freight routing issues through Reading. However, the full grant will only be paid upon receipt of proof of spend and achievement of set milestones, in order to ensure value for money. The majority of projects have held initial meetings and begun work.
- 4.5 A proposal to trial Wave and Pay ticketing on the South Reading Greenwave Contract Bus Services was agreed with Reading Buses and Ticketer. This will allow passengers to use their EMV enabled 'wave and pay' bank card to purchase cash fare equivalents on-bus. This trial will involve 'closed' and 'open' stages, which are programmed for the next Quarter (July-Sept).
- 4.6 **Cycle Hire:** The Readybike scheme launched at 27 locations around town on 10 June 2014, with 200 purple and orange bicycles available. The launch event included participation from local partners and the press and was well-received. Activities using the Readybikes were arranged for Bike Week, with travel advisors encouraging and assisting new users to join the scheme.
- 4.7 The final two locations in Phase 1, Reading Station South and Earley Station were delayed due to third party matters and will go live later this summer. Depending on the popularity of the scheme over the summer and the availability of funding from elsewhere in the LSTF programme or third parties, a limited Phase 2 expansion could be developed in the Autumn.
- 4.8 **Active Travel:** Public information events were held in May in Caversham on the Pedestrian/Cycle bridge. These were well attended. Procurement is progressing, with related works to the playground to commence shortly.
- 4.9 The Cycling Strategy 2014 and annual Implementation Plan were adopted as Council policy in March 2014. A West Reading workshop took place with the Cycle Forum on 30th April. Notes and recommendations from this workshop can be found in Appendix A. New cycle parking has been installed on Wokingham Road and at Meadway Leisure Centre, and further stands are planned to be installed within the town centre. The access road alongside the Telephone Exchange in Caversham was resurfaced to improve the link, which forms part of the local and national cycle network, for pedestrians and cyclists. Branded cycle signs are being expanded to include the town centre and to support the cycle hire scheme. Improved lighting is being installed at County Lock and along the A33 footpath.
- 4.10 The detailed design is being undertaken for advisory cycle lanes on Wokingham Road, following feedback from Ward Councillors and the Cycle Forum.

- 4.11 Fergal Contracting Limited was appointed to implement the pedestrian and cycle improvements along London Road and related to the A4 Pinch Point at Cemetery Junction. Works are progressing well and are on-track for completion by September 2014. Officers have identified a preferred option in relation to discussions with the University to install a pedestrian refuge island on Pepper Lane to aid pedestrian access to both the University and Leighton Park School. Planning permission has been granted for the works to St Laurence's Church Wall, which will improve the pedestrian route alongside and works are due to start in October 2014.
- 4.12 The 'Bike It' Officer continues to work with schools across Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire to encourage pupils, parents and staff to consider cycling and/or scooting to school. A Bike It Day was organised at St. Mary's and All Saints with all 480 pupils taking part. Events involved the school being split into three teams - Bike It, Bake It and Build It with pupils developing their cycle skills on the playground, baking bike biscuits to fundraise for pool bikes for the school and others building and painting posters for bike safety. The Bike It Officer is in New Christ Church Primary week commencing 9th June for a Dragon's Den event. The CTC Cycle Development Officer has been supporting events organised as part of the European Cycle Challenge, including community led-rides and Dr Bike sessions. The CTC programme is now concentrating on supporting the launch of the cycle hire scheme and organising events for Bike Week between 14th and 22nd June.
- 4.13 Reading participated in the European Cycling Challenge throughout May. This was the same period during which the health-funded, Reading-wide 'Beat the Street' challenge was running. The latter was organised on the model of the Caversham challenge funded by LSTF last year. The Pocket Places project also organised a workshop in May and is supporting Play Streets initiatives over the summer.
- 4.14 **Park & Ride/Rail:** Procurement of a contractor to undertake the construction works for both Mereok and Winnersh Triangle sites is ongoing and detailed design is well progressed. Heads of Terms have been negotiated between Reading and Wokingham Borough Councils.
- 4.15 Additional funding from the Department for Transport's Access for All programme has been secured for the lift bridge related to the works to create a Park & Rail site at Theale Station. This project is being led by West Berkshire and First Great Western, alongside Network Rail.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The LSTF Project supports the aims and objectives of the LTP and contributes to the Council's strategic aims, as set out below:
- To develop Reading as a Green City with a sustainable environment and economy at the heart of the Thames Valley.
 - To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 Consultation activities on LTP3 during its development contributed to the LSTF submissions. Engagement is a key component of the LSTF programme and consultation with stakeholders and local communities will be undertaken throughout the project. Public events were held in Caversham in May to provide information on the pedestrian/cycle bridge.
- 6.2 A press officer has been hired to work one day a week on LSTF projects in order to initiate more proactive media engagement.
- 6.3 Individual consultations on key LSTF projects have been undertaken throughout the duration of the programme, including consultation forms being published and updated on the corporate website as appropriate.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Legal support has been allocated to progress planning and land acquisition requirements for key projects and to offer contractual advice for procurement exercises.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Funding approved by DfT for the Reading LSTF Small Package and the LSTF Large Partnership Package comprises both revenue and capital ring-fenced grants and local contributions.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 Cabinet reports - 11th April 2011 and 28th November 2011.
- 9.2 Traffic Management Advisory Panel reports 9th September 2011 to 14th March 2013.
- 9.3 Traffic Management Sub-Committee since 13th June 2013.

APPENDIX A - West Reading Cycle Forum Workshop

A West Reading workshop was held on 30th April and attended by local cycling representatives: Adrian Lawson and Tanja Rebel as well as Transport Officers: Simon Beasley and Emma Baker. The below points are a summary of suggestions discussed at the workshop, which Officers are proposing to investigate further and action as appropriate:

- Confirm cycle parking availability at destinations, such as local shops on Meadway opposite Dee Road, Southcote Farm Lane and Tilehurst Triangle and install as needed.
- Review the current discretionary road markings on the Meadway and upgrading the markings to advisory cycle lanes between Liebenrood Road Roundabout and Honey End Lane.
- Investigate opportunities to install cycle lanes on Bath Road between borough boundary and town centre, including on the bridge above the railway, and advanced stops lines at junctions.
- Improve subway link under the Bath Road near Honey End Lane (e.g. lighting, community art project and permitting cycling through the link).
- Review access barriers and remove or upgrade as appropriate.
- Install dropped kerbs along a proposed route extension between Underwood Road and Southcote Farm Lane and review barriers as per the previous action.
- Improve unmade path along Southcote Farm Lane by rolling planings into the surface as previously completed as part of the Links to Schools project.
- Investigate improving the link on the corner of Bath Road/Southcote Lane to enable cyclists to avoid the roundabout junction.
- Upgrade the pedestrian crossing on Bath Road near Downshire Square.
- Install 'Except for cyclists' sign on Prospect Street on the poles with 'no through route' signs.