

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	11 September 2014	AGENDA ITEM:	18
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 since the last report and that officers continue to deliver this programme and report progress to this Sub-Committee.

### 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 In addition, the DfT announced in July 2014 that Reading Borough Council has been awarded £996k LSTF revenue funding for 2015/16. The project proposal includes a range of sustainable transport initiatives focused on neighbourhood-based active travel interventions and developing more interactive online resources. A future report is intended to be taken to Policy Committee seeking appropriate spend approval.

### 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 have continued to provide sustainable travel advice to companies around Reading, including at Thames Valley Park and within the town centre.
- 4.3 **Fares, Ticketing and Information:** Installation of the Bluetooth journey time monitoring system is nearing completion and data validation is currently being undertaken to produce live journey times for all key corridors of the urban area. When validated the journey times will be published on the roadside variable message signs and the Travel Reading Live website as well as being used to improve the Council's ability to manage the road network.
- 4.4 The first phase of the traffic signal upgrades is underway with works commenced at the first site (School Road/Norcot Road junction). Implementation of the remaining 11 junctions has been scheduled throughout the remainder of 2014, and procurement of a contractor to undertake the second phase of upgrade works (19

sites) is ongoing. The upgrades to the method of control of the signals will improve junction efficiency and provide benefits across modes.

- 4.5 Good progress is being made by the scheme promoters on delivery of the 11 proposals which were awarded grants through the Challenge Fund. The Reading Bicycle Kitchen and University Students Union projects to recycle bikes have benefited from bikes being donated by re3 waste management, and young offenders are maintaining the bikes for Reading Bicycle Kitchen. CTC's project has included setting up community bike clubs and running sessions at Prospect Park including led rides, cycle training and maintenance courses.
- 4.6 **Cycle Hire:** The Readybike scheme launched at 27 locations around town on 10 June 2014, with 200 purple and orange bicycles available. On the launch day alone there were 66 bike hire rentals from 15 different docking stations. Since then the good spread of usage across the 27 docking stations has continued. In June there were 2,198 rentals, which increased to 3,365 in July covering an estimated 40,186 miles. The average rental length in July was 54 minutes, although over half of rentals were for shorter periods under 30 minutes. Analysis of usage patterns suggests a mix of commuting and leisure use. Day tickets are the most popular product sold, although more annual subscriptions are expected after the first few months when people have been trying out the bikes for the first time.
- 4.7 Some clear journey patterns made on the bikes are emerging as anticipated:
- Within the University's Whiteknights campus - particularly high use at weekend Open Days and usage is expected to rise with the start of the autumn term.
  - Caversham to the town centre and Reading station - there is a consistent heavy demand during weekdays and weekends.
  - Reading College to the town centre - particularly high usage in late afternoons from college into town.
- 4.8 In additions some regular journey patterns are emerging which were not initially foreseen:
- Town centre to Thames Valley Park in late afternoon/early evening and returning to town early in the morning - indicating possible usage by workers on a night shift.
  - Within Palmer Park - rentals are popular for people cycling around the park for leisure/exercise.
- 4.9 Overall the scheme has proven to be popular to date and we will continue to monitor usage and review the potential to expand the scheme further if future funding opportunities arise.
- 4.10 **Active Travel:** Tender returns are currently being assessed for the procurement of a contractor to undertake the construction of the Pedestrian/Cycle bridge over the River Thames. Works on-site to reconfigure and upgrade the playground have been completed.
- 4.11 Construction works are due to start on-site in September to reconfigure the St Mary's Butts / Castle Street junction, including extended pavements and improvements for all users.

- 4.12 Plans for the upgrade works to St Laurence's Church Wall and associated pedestrian route are progressing well following the granting of planning permission, with work on-site scheduled to start in October.
- 4.13 Following a request from local residents, proposals for a pedestrian crossing refuge island on Rotherfield Way have been developed to facilitate pedestrian movements on a key desire line for Highdown School.
- 4.14 New cycle parking facilities have been installed at Arthur Hill and Broad St East, and plans are being developed to increase the number of spaces available at other locations including Kings St, Reading Station northern interchange, Cemetery Junction and Broad St/West St junction. In addition, branded cycle route signs have been extended to include the town centre and to support the cycle hire scheme.
- 4.15 The Council will be promoting Cycle to Work Day on 4<sup>th</sup> September to staff and local businesses, including a number of activities supported by the Cycle Development Officer such as a Biker's Breakfast and Dr Bike sessions. Cycling sessions for 3-16 years olds have been run at Palmer Park through the summer, with over 370 participants to date.
- 4.16 Pocket Places, the Sustrans led community engagement project at Northumberland Avenue, organised a series of play streets events on Exbourne Road in June and July. Activities included bike polo, bike football, bike powered smoothie making and chalk games. Another event with similar activities will be organised for the end of September.
- 4.17 **Park & Ride/Rail:** Tender returns are currently being assessed for the procurement of a contractor to undertake the construction works for the park & ride sites at Mere oak and Winnersh Triangle.
- 4.18 Construction works to create a Park & Rail site at Theale Station are progressing well. 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 - 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011 and 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011.
- 9.2 Traffic Management Advisory Panel reports - 9<sup>th</sup> September 2011 to 14<sup>th</sup> March 2013.
- 9.3 Traffic Management Sub-Committee since 13<sup>th</sup> June 2013.