READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 SEPTEMBER 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	CYCLING INITIATIVES – FUNDING UPDATE		
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1.   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1   The purpose of this report is to update the Sub-Committee on funding secured by the Council from the Department for Transport for the delivery of Bikeability cycle training and the EU-funded incentivisation project EMPOWER.

2.   RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1   That the Sub-Committee notes the contents of this report and agrees for the Council to participate in Bikeability cycle training and the EMPOWER EU project.

3.   POLICY CONTEXT

3.1   The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory document setting out the Council's transport strategy and policy. Reading Borough Council's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for the period 2011-26 was adopted by the Council on 29 March 2011.

3.2   The Cycle Strategy 2014: Bridging Gaps, Overcoming Barriers & Promoting Safer Cycling, was adopted by the Council on 19 March 2014 as a sub-strategy to the Local Transport Plan. The Strategy

outlined our intention to seek new funding opportunities to continue delivering a range of initiatives and projects utilising UK and EU funding sources, such as those described in this report. The two funding programmes - Bikeability and EMPOWER, directly support the delivery of cycling policies outlined in the Cycling Strategy under 'Events and Campaigns' and 'Training and Education' to encourage more people to consider cycling for local journeys, such as those made to schools and neighbourhood centres.

4.   THE PROPOSAL

Bikeability Cycle Training

4.1   Bikeability is the national standard cycle training scheme delivered in schools for children aged 10 and above. The purpose of Bikeability funding has shifted since Reading started administering the scheme in 2009/10 when our volunteer-programme was phased out. Funding initially focussed on the delivery of a combined Level One and Two course enabling children to learn to ride in a playground environment before being taken on-carriageway to build their skills and confidence in trafficked conditions. In 2012, funding was secured for the delivery of Bikeability Level 3 enabling trainees aged 11 plus to improve their skills developed as part of the Level 2 course, including the opportunity to tackle busier and more complex junctions that may be encountered when riding independently to secondary school.

4.2   A DfT announcement recently confirmed funding for the period September 2016 to March 2020 to the value of £189,469. The dedicated Department for Transport grant will enable us to continuing delivering on the core Bikeability scheme previously delivered and offer new modules to further develop trainee's cycle skills and extend the benefits of Bikeability to younger children. Bikeability Level 1 will be offered to children aged 8 and above and supported by Learn to Ride for children who are transitioning to ride a two-wheeler with pedals or adults that are unable to cycle. Other modules aimed at children will teach them how to maintain their bicycle, subsidise recycled bicycles and fund promotional events and campaigns.

EMPOWER EU Project

4.3   The Council has been accepted onto the EMPOWER EU Project as a Take Up City which includes an award of €100,000 to incentivise cycling in Reading. The project sets out to substantially reduce the use of conventionally fuelled vehicles by adopting a 'reward rather than punishment' approach. EMPOWER uses positive incentives delivered through smart phone technologies to persuade people to make modest shifts in their transport choices.

4.4 The project has 4 components which work together as a package:

- Recruitment – using special events to encourage people to find out about how they can start cycling or to cycle more. These events will include a joint event with the University's CycleBOOM project which has encouraged a take up of cycling by the elderly. The results of their wellbeing study over the last 2 years will be presented along with the aims of the EMPOWER project with an opportunity for representatives of community groups and organisations to put forward ideas and to take news back to their members. Children will be reached through a number of events and challenges in conjunction with Beat the Street and workplace cycling challenges will also be developed.

- ICT – it is proposed that the BetterPoints Smartphone App already used in Reading will be developed to enable potential cyclists to log cycling journeys on a dashboard, to get information on journeys made and to receive personalised messages.

- Incentives – Prizes, points and competitions will be developed across the project period from September 2016 to July 2017 to encourage people to take up cycling.

- Marketing – the aim will be to increase awareness of the project to everyone including car drivers with the aim of encouraging people to take up cycling as a new means of travelling and to set up workplace challenges to encourage cycling.

4.5 Work will be progressed collaboratively with the project team and with other organisations and community groups in Reading to draw up a package of initiatives to incentivise people who currently do not cycle to take up cycling, including people who have recently moved to the town and those seeking work.

4.6 The EMPOWER project runs until July 2017 and therefore will not be affected by the recent EU referendum result.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The delivery of cycle initiatives outlined above will help to deliver the following Corporate Plan Service Priorities:
- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Our current Bikeability provider – Avanti Cycling, liaises directly with schools to organise and deliver Bikeability courses that typically take

place throughout the school day. Courses held during school holidays are promoted through schools and via social media channels.

6.2 EMPOWER aims to attract community engagement through special events and information will be available via a Smartphone App as well as conventional leaflets and other marketing.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 It should be noted that our existing Bikeability agreement with Avanti Cycling is under review and a new contract is expected to be in place by April 2017. Bikeability Grant Recipients and Scheme Providers are required to complete an annual registration process, including producing evidence that all Bikeability Instructors are DBS-checked and that relevant insurances are in place.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 The Council has carried out an equality impact assessment scoping exercise, and considers that the proposals do not have a direct impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Bikeability is funded until March 2020 through a Department for Transport grant totalling £189,469 also supported by a 10% local contribution met through existing transport budgets.

9.2 EMPOWER is funded through a grant of €100,000 from the EU Horizon 2020 fund.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Cycling Strategy 2014 & Implementation Plan, Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee Report, 19th March 2014.

10.2 Bikeability – Procurement Strategy, Traffic Management Sub-Committee, 10th March 2016