

Item:

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Report to Partnership Meeting 3 February 2023

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Active Travel Transformation Fund 23/24 and Project Update

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on Active Travel Transformation Project and the Active Travel Transformation Fund 23/24.

Active Travel Transformation Project: Background

The Active Travel Transformation Project (ATTP) has been established to help improve delivery processes to match the ambition of Active Travel policy and funding commitments. The Active Travel budget has been growing in recent years and is currently £150million with the Scottish Government committing to increase the budget to at least £320million per annum or 10% of the total transport budget by 2024/5.

The Project is developing evidenced proposals for an alternative holistic system for Active Travel delivery, and will make recommendations on the delivery models required to implement this system this year.

The Project is being delivered across two phases. The initial phase involved evaluation and evidence gathering with an assessment of the existing delivery model and landscape and identifying opportunities. The second phase is now developing and appraising proposals for an alternative system for Active Travel delivery.

Next Steps

With a need to scale-up capacity and capability (both across delivery partners and within Transport Scotland) and given timescales inherent in any infrastructure project, Transport Scotland have indicated that it would not be feasible for the effective and complete implementation of a new AT delivery model in place for 2023/24.

It was therefore agreed that 2023/24 funding which has not been committed through existing Transport Scotland AT funding programmes would be allocated to a new £20m-£25m AT Transformation Fund for 2023/24. The Fund was launched in December 2022, with applications to be submitted by 27th January 2023.

In a progress report (December 23), Transport Scotland have advised partners that establishing a delivery system similar to Active Travel England has already been discounted, given the challenges this could present not only in terms of pace (due to the length of time such an agency would take to establish and resource), but also governance and integration (due to potential distancing from wider TS and SG related activity).

Draft delivery model options are currently being developed and appraised through the Project, structured around four pillars:

- Structure: the optimum model to achieve outcomes
- Process: linked to longer term funding certainty and how to deliver pipelines of network delivery, addressing process issues evident in current delivery (e.g. delivery stages where progress may be stalled or impeded).
- People: addressing current resourcing challenges e.g. capability, capacity and skills and industry training.
- Governance: how we can show and develop leadership, enable effective and timely decision-making, ensure robust oversight, and provide clarity to local delivery partners on accelerated delivery

As part of this work, the Project Team are reviewing the strategic opportunities and challenges presented by a regional approach to Active Travel delivery, and are now working with partners in more detail to consider what a regional layer to delivery might look like in practice. HITRANS has worked with other Regional Transport Partnerships to outline the potential benefits which RTPs could bring to active travel delivery and outcomes.

Active Travel Transformation Fund 23/24

The 2023/24 Transformation Fund is a capital fund with an anticipated budget in the region of £20m-£25m. This is a new capital fund which has not been committed through existing funding programmes in the current or previous financial years.

The Active Travel Transformation Fund will include funding made available to partners:

- to support the delivery of eligible construction ready AT schemes in 2023/24; and as a secondary aim
- to support partners' progress towards successful applications in future years, helping to ensure that there is both a route to funding for more partners, and that a wider pipeline of projects is being developed ahead of the budget commitment for 2024/25.

Transport Scotland have advised partners that while the time taken to assess the applications will depend on the number and complexity of the applications received, their intention is to advise partners if they have been successful in applying for funding in March 2023.

Applications Overview

A summary of the projects submitted to the Active Travel Transformation Fund 2023/24 by HITRANS and our partner local authorities is provided below:

HITRANS: No additional capital funds sought for 23/24 beyond those applied for through the Regional Active Travel Fund. However, in responding HITRANS identified the additional resource that would help progress active travel strategy development and implementation both within HITRANS and to support Partners including: Project management; Mapping; Data analysis; Procurement; Reporting; Financial management; Design & surveys (eg. topographical); Communications & engagement; Marketing; Legal services (inc TROs).

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar: Applied for capital funding for 11 projects to be delivered in 2023/24: 1) Lochboisdale Active Travel Links in partnership with Storras Uibhist; 2) Willowglen Active Travel Improvements, Stornoway; 3) North Street Active Travel Continuity, Stornoway; 4) Habost Footway Final Section; 5) UHI Outer Hebrides Active Travel Improvements, Stornoway; 6) Garenin Road Safety Improvements; 7) Barvas to Brue Community Links to Schools; 8) Sgoil nan Loch Segregated Active Travel Route; 9) Hebridean Way Balallan & Laxay; 10) Balivanich Safe Route to School; 11) Barra Herring Walk, with Barra & Vatersay Community Trust. Total bid: £3.2M. CnES have also identified the following additional staff resource as helpful in progressing active travel strategy development and implementation: project management, community engagement, detailed design, procurement and construction supervision.

Orkney Islands Council: No additional capital funds sought for 23/24.

Moray Council: No additional capital funds sought for 23/24 but identified the following additional staff resource as helpful in progressing active travel strategy development and implementation: Dedicated project managers for larger schemes & the ability to capitalise all design work so it can be done by external consultants.

Argyll and Bute Council: Applied for capital funding for two projects to be delivered in 2023/24: 1) Bowmore-Bridgend Active Travel Path, delivered in partnership with Islay Community Access Group; 2) A83 Rail Overbridge Active Travel Enablement Works at Tarbet, delivered by Network Rail: total bid £5.1M. Also identified the following additional staff resource as helpful in progressing active travel strategy development and implementation: Experienced project managers - especially construction project management; Design engineers; Land Surveyor/Agent; Community Engagement; Behaviour change.

The Highland Council: Applied for capital funding for two projects to be delivered in 2023/24: 1) Wick High Street; 2) Section of Beauly-Inverness network. Total bid: £2.88M. Identified additional staff resource as helpful in progressing active travel strategy development and implementation, including project management, design and community and landowner engagement.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note this report.

Risk Register

RTS Delivery

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work supports both relevant RTS objectives and those of the National Transport Strategy

Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work supports the development of our Active Travel policies.

Financial

Impact – Positive

Comment – The Active Travel Transformation Project will develop proposals for the an alternativ delivery models for the Active Travel budget which is increasing to £320million or 10 of the total transport budget.

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – HITRANS support for active travel helps eliminate the barriers to travel for all and removes a number of physical accessibility barriers.

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Date: 1st February 2023