

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET****DATE: 30 MARCH 2021****REPORT OF: MR MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS****LEAD OFFICER: KATIE STEWART – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE****SUBJECT: ACTIVE TRAVEL PROGRAMME UPDATE****ORGANISATION STRATEGY: TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITY/ENABLING A GREENER FUTURE  
PRIORITY AREA:****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Surrey County Council is keen to support the ability of residents to make sustainable choices in how they travel, and to this end, has been awarded funding from the Department of Transport (DfT) of £6.45m to deliver Active Travel schemes by April 2022. Active travel schemes will support the County's priority areas by increasing sustainable and healthy travel choices to residents.

Prioritisation of the schemes initially identified in the programme is required to ensure that the schemes proceeding to delivery are in accordance with the aims of the programme and can be constructed in the required timeframe.

This active travel programme is running in parallel with and will help to inform the progression of the 11 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans across Surrey. Cabinet are therefore asked to agree the prioritisation process so a final programme of active travel schemes can be determined and proceed to construction.

Given the timeline and local impact of the programme, Cabinet will also be asked to delegate the approval of the final programme to the Director of Highways & Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and the relevant Divisional Member.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet agree the prioritisation process so a final programme of schemes can be determined and proceed to construction;
2. Cabinet delegate the approval of the final programme as well as authorisation to advertise and consider any relevant Traffic Regulation Orders to the Director of Highways & Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and the relevant Divisional Member, once agreed by the Capital Programme Panel;
3. The local and joint committees are provided regular updates of progress of the relevant schemes within their areas.

## REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Increasing residents' choices on travel and accessibility of travel is important for our residents and as such is reflected in our ambitions and community vision. Active travel has also been a key area of government policy with the publication of the Department for Transport's *Gear Change* plan which set out the ambition for the UK to become a walking and cycling nation.

SCC want to ensure that the active travel schemes being delivered for residents align with our own ambitions and objectives as well as ensuring that the grant is directed to the priority schemes in the time required and with the right local engagement

On this basis, consideration has been given to the prioritisation process required to achieve this aim. It is anticipated this will include the following aspects;

- Consultation outcomes
- Contribution to sustainable travel choices for commuting and leisure
- Contribution to a reduction in carbon emission
- Improvement in air quality through reduction in congestion
- Links to health, education, and jobs

We are taking a consultation approach that provides robust evidence. This consultative approach is not only important in helping us to prioritise but also in meeting the Government's expectations in the second round of schemes.

It is imperative that the consultation is representative of the communities that live around the proposed active travel schemes as well as the wider population across Surrey. The work will extend beyond the groups that typically participate in consultation exercises to reach those who, for whatever reason, do not typically engage in traditional consultation exercises but are nonetheless affected by the proposed changes.

Once the consultation has concluded, the schemes will be prioritised based on the results of the consultation and the factors explained later in this report. Those schemes that are unsuccessful in being prioritised for delivery will remain on list for future funding opportunities and review through the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) programme.

## DETAILS:

### Background

1. Surrey's net zero carbon target by 2050, as set by the Climate Change Strategy for Surrey, together with the Council commitment to radically rethink transport, sets the agenda that these active travel schemes contribute towards by improving Surrey's active travel infrastructure.
2. There is a national move to a more strategic approach to active travel with the introduction of Local cycling and walking infrastructure plans (LCWIPs) , which we have been engaging with, but in the interim, the Government has put in place the COVID active travel scheme which we have engaged proactively.
3. Surrey County Council (SCC) bid for the first round of government emergency active travel funding which was to help create wider footways, pop-up cycle lanes and allow social distancing to support those people who were encouraged not to use public transport. SCC received £848k and created 23 schemes, ranging from cycle racks to closing lanes and creating dedicated cycle lanes. However, the timescales for implementation of these schemes was unfortunately short and didn't allow time for our normal consultation process.

4. In July the government released the second phase of funding. A bid was submitted for nine schemes with a value of £7.8m which indicated our ambition for sustainable travel choice. In December SCC was allocated £6.45m with a funding condition that we consult in greater detail with residents, businesses, district and borough councils as well as county councillors and MPs.
5. The nine active travel schemes which were included in our bid to DfT and received £6.45m were conceived based on local need, following the same principles that the LCWIP scheme development follows and are detailed in **Annex 1**. These schemes have been chosen as they contribute to a community's ability to embrace more sustainable travel options.
6. Officers are embarking on detailed consultation and will be engaging as broad a range of residents as possible in local areas affected directly by the schemes as well as broader stakeholders such as MPs businesses and other interested parties. The methodology for the consultation is detailed below.

### Consultation Approach

7. It is vital that the views of Surrey's residents, community groups, disability groups, businesses, districts and boroughs, as well as a range of other stakeholders, are considered in the development, implementation and monitoring of the proposed schemes.
8. The consultation uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to understand local public opinion. This includes those who are directly affected by the schemes (living or working within 2km) as well as including a broader sample of Surrey. This results in an in depth understanding of the priorities both at the local level to the schemes and at a countywide level. This ensures that the findings can be generalised to be representative of views held by our whole population. The stages are as follows:

#### Qualitative Phase

- Hosted online community meetings with 120 residents spread across Surrey. In this online forum, participants are invited to complete a series of tasks and facilitated discussions around active travel. Participants complete a range of tasks to assess pros and cons of active travel in general before considering specific schemes which directly impact them.
- Identical to the community hosted meetings with residents, there was a series of hosted online meetings with 70 Surrey business including a range of different sizes and sectors. Participants considered a range of pros and cons in relation to active travel and discussed the specific scenarios, but this time from the businesses' perspective (e.g. how will it affect businesses, customers, staff etc.).
- The purpose of this qualitative stage was to explore in an open, deliberative way the existing and perceived benefits and barriers to active travel and to highlight and expose key considerations to be tested on a quantitative scale.

#### Quantitative Phase

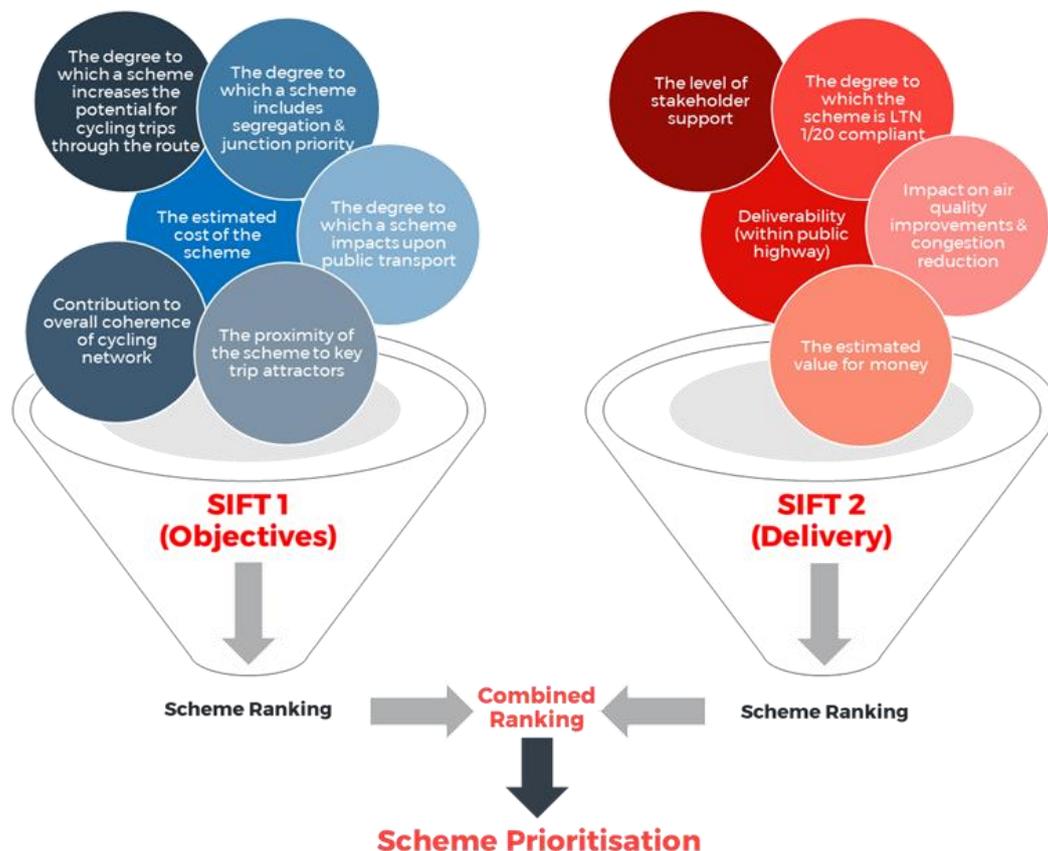
- Survey of 1,250 residents local to the schemes which ensured a good spread across different groups and is statistically representative of the local population. The survey was administered online via a social research panel (500 responses) and via telephone (750 responses) to a sample of people who are invited to take part in the research. This approach utilises proportional samples that mitigate against the potential for bias in favour of or against active travel and which ensure representative samples in the relevant areas.
9. This approach has been designed to improve the quality and breadth of evidence on which decisions can be taken and should result in more representative findings than would otherwise be the case with traditional forms of consultation which relies on respondents self-selecting to take part in the research. Such methods of traditional engagement and consultation often result in unreliable datasets where the data tends to be heavily skewed towards people with the strongest opinion on the topic.

10. In addition, the consultation will also identify which arguments or facts change opinion and perceptions the most. This will result in us being able to better support the development of more effective public communication for the roll out of these and future active travel schemes.
11. Under requirements set out by the DfT, we will also seek views from some of our partners as part of this consultation including: Districts and Boroughs, local MPs, Blue Light services and bus operators on the proposed schemes,
12. Officers will continue engagement with divisional members for the 9 proposed schemes through regular briefings, ensuring input into the development and delivery of schemes.
13. Supporting this consultation, we have utilised the Council's Commonplace website, which was originally trialled under the first tranche of active travel measures from earlier last year, to gather views from residents about the 9 proposed schemes since August and this feedback will contribute to our prioritisation of schemes.

#### PROPOSED PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK:

14. Alongside the consultation, a strategic, qualitative evaluation of each of the nine DfT Active Travel Tranche 2 schemes will be undertaken to sift and prioritise the schemes. The schemes will be assessed using a Multiple Criteria Assessment Framework (MCAF) to allow them to be ranked against one another based upon a series of criteria. At this stage, each of the criteria will be equally weighted, although it is proposed that there will be a higher weighting given to consultation feedback. The appraisal process, shown in **Figure A** below will involve two simultaneous sifts:
  - Sift 1: the extent to which each scheme meets with the DfT ATF Tranche 2 objectives; and
  - Sift 2: the extent to which each scheme meets the following;
    - Consultation outcomes
    - Contribution to sustainable travel choices for commuting and leisure
    - Contribution to a reduction in carbon emission
    - Improvement in air quality through reduction in congestion
    - Links to health, education, and jobs
15. For each criteria, a score will be given between -2 and 2. The scores across all criteria will be combined and a subsequent ranking given. The rankings for each of the schemes, across both sifts, will be combined to enable us to prioritise which schemes we proceed with as part of the DfT Active Travel Tranche 2 budget allocation. Those that score the highest will be those deemed most likely to:
  - meet DfT ATF Tranche 2 objectives;
  - fit with wider active travel strategies and future ambitions of Surrey County Council;
  - have stakeholder support;
  - have the potential to increase cycling;
  - comply with the most recent design guidance
  - offer value for money; and
  - be feasible and deliverable within the estimated budget and timescales.

**Figure A – Suggested Sifting Process**



16. With the proposed Prioritisation Framework, a ranked list of the nine proposed schemes will be developed and detail design will be undertaken with a view to completing those schemes deemed affordable with the DfT grant of £6.45 by April 2022.

**RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

- 17. Risk- Following consultation we receive positive feedback on all 9 schemes  
Impact- inability to deliver all schemes due to cost and possibility of reputational damage if we ask people their opinion and then don't deliver.  
Mitigation- be transparent and robust in terms of consultation and priority scoring and ensure we deliver the right schemes for the right reasons based on evidence
- 18. Risk- Following consultation we receive negative feedback on some/all schemes  
Impact- Difficulty in delivering unpopular schemes. Reputational damage with DfT as number of schemes in bid not delivered and money not spent  
Mitigation- Be very transparent and robust in terms of consultation and priority scoring and ensure we deliver the right schemes for the right reasons based on evidence
- 19. Risk- Affordability- not currently known exactly what we can afford to deliver  
Impact- The number of schemes and extent of schemes will be reduced. Reputational damage to SCC in eyes of DfT if we don't deliver what we said we would due to costs  
Mitigation- Keep tight cost control and get comprehensive cost estimate of all schemes. Manage expectations early of our ability to deliver.
- 20. Risk- Programme not adhered to.  
Impact- Schemes not delivered by April 2022. Reputational impact with DfT. Money not spent

Mitigation- Effective Project Management. Bring in additional resource if programme starts to slip

#### **FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

21. Surrey County Council has been awarded grant funding of £6.446m under the Active Travel Fund Tranche 2, comprised of capital grant of £5.157m and revenue grant of £1.289m. The costs of implementing the measures outlined in this report are expected to be met from the approved grant award, with no additional contribution from the Council.
22. The cost of maintaining active travel measures in the future will be met from existing approved Highways & Transport budgets. The final programme will be considered by the Council's Capital Programme Panel prior to a delegated decision being made, in line with recommendation 2.

#### **SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY**

23. Although significant progress has been made over the last twelve months to improve the Council's financial position, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2021/22 remains uncertain. The public health crisis has resulted in increased costs which may not be fully funded. With uncertainty about the ongoing impact of this and no clarity on the extent to which both central and local funding sources might be affected in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term.
24. The cost of the measures outlined in this report are expected to be met from the Active Travel Fund grant or from existing budgets. The project will be reviewed by the Council's Capital Programme Panel prior to commencing. As such, the Section 151 Officer supports the recommended approach.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER**

25. Cabinet gave its informal approval to a report on the emergency active travel programme in July 2020
26. The Department Of Transport funding is paid pursuant to s31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and is subject to conditions which include consultation, monitoring and evaluation, the way the grant may be used and the circumstances in which the grant must be repaid. Consultation must of course be meaningful and the general principles apply. These are that consultation should occur when proposals are at a formative stage; consultations should give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and consultations should allow adequate time for consideration and response. At that stage the Council will provide clear evidence that as decision maker it has considered the consultation responses, or a summary of them, before taking its decision.
27. The Department of Transport advises that the grant may be subject to State Aid regulations and that the County must satisfy itself that it is State Aid compliant. Since the UK's departure from the European Union on 31 December 2020 the EU State aid rules no longer apply to funding and other forms of support measures granted to business by UK public authorities. However, in place of the EU State aid rules, new provisions are set out in the new Trade and Cooperation Agreement (the 'TCA'). "Requirements for a new domestic UK subsidy control regime". The concept of 'subsidy' replaces 'State aid'; 'Subsidy' is defined in terms very similar to the concept of 'aid', meaning that what would have been considered 'aid' before 31 December 2020 is largely likely to be captured under the Subsidy Control regime from 1 January 2021.

## EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY

28. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) will be undertaken as part of each scheme.

## OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

29. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

| Area assessed:   | Direct Implications:  |
|--|---|
| Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children                        | No significant implications arising from this report  |
| Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults | No significant implications arising from this report  |
| Environmental sustainability                                     | Increasing the ability to be able to take vehicles off the network and therefore longer-term potential contribution to carbon reduction |
| Public Health  | No significant implications arising from this report but see below  |

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

30. An Environmental Sustainability Assessment (ESA) will be undertaken as required as part of the individual business case development for each scheme.

## PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

31. Public Health implications will be dealt with within the individual Business Cases.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

32. In terms of next steps, the consultation has been completed over February and March 2021 as described above. In addition, MPs, disability groups, emergency services, districts and boroughs and divisional members will be consulted on the proposed schemes, detailed in **Annex 1**.

33. The results of the all the consultations will be shared with the Chairmen of Local/Joint committees to obtain their views on the schemes, which will be taken into consideration when the schemes are later prioritised for delivery against the available budget.

34. Schemes will be prioritised according to the framework set out in this report taking into account the results of the consultation. Subject to agreement, the prioritised schemes will be constructed in 2021/22.

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**Contact Officer:**

Roger Williams, Active Travel Manager, 07970 761302

**Consulted:**

Cabinet Member for Highways

Cross section of Highway Officers

Divisional Members for details of the schemes

**Annexes:**

Annex 1- Active Travel Scheme maps

**Sources/background papers:**

None

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