

Individual Executive Decision Notice

Report title	Active Travel Fund Schemes Consultation Outcome	
Decision designation	GREEN	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change Portfolio	
Wards affected	Heath Town; St Peter's;	
Accountable Director	Ross Cook, Director of City Housing and Environment	
Originating service	Service area (not directorate)	
Accountable employee	Tim Philpot Tel Email	Professional Lead, Transport Strategy 5465/07825530346 tim.philpot@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by		

Summary

This report advises of the results of the consultation on two Active Travel Fund cycle route schemes and asks approval to proceed with implementation of the schemes.

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

That the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change, in consultation with the Director for City Housing and Environment

1. Note that proper consultation on the schemes has taken place and that the results present no substantial reasons not to proceed with the schemes as
2. Approve the implementation of the schemes as designed.

Councillor Steve Evans
Cabinet Member for City Environment
and Climate Change
Date: 30 July 2021

Ross Cook
Director of City Housing and Environment
Date: 30 July 2021

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In June 2020 the Department for Transport (DfT) indicated that funding would be made available for highway schemes that facilitate active travel (e.g. walking and cycling). Local Authorities were asked to propose suitable schemes and Wolverhampton Council identified two cycle route schemes, Ring Road St Peter's/St Andrew's and Wednesfield Road.
- 1.2 These were assessed and accepted as suitable. DfT subsequently advised that a condition of receiving funding for the schemes was that proper consultation should take place over any schemes and amendments considered. This was to include four specific groups:
- MPs and Ward Councillors
 - Residents
 - Businesses impacted
 - Community services

Prior to commencement of construction Local Authorities were required to confirm to DfT that this had been done.

2.0 Progress.

- 2.1 In April 2021 a first consultation was carried out on indicative schemes based on initial designs. Consultation was carried out using social media, the Council's consultation webpage, the Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) Commonplace webpage and a mailshot to over 1,000 addresses along the Wednesfield Road.
- 2.2 Although the number of responses was small (45 total), responses to both schemes were supportive with the clear majority in favour, and with some constructively proposing amendments to them. Three responses in opposition to the Wednesfield Road scheme mentioned principally the value for money as being unacceptable.
- 2.3 On this basis the schemes progressed to detailed design and a second consultation was carried out along similar lines to the first. Again the number of responses was small (15), and all but one related to the Wednesfield Road scheme. Of these, 8 expressed opposition to the scheme mainly on the grounds of traffic delay anticipated arising from the loss of a traffic lane for the creation of the cycle route. Value for money of the scheme was also questioned.

3.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 3.1 Naturally the option exists to revisit the design of the Wednesfield Road scheme with the intention of addressing the concerns raised in the consultation. However, the timescale for accessing the Active Travel Fund is such that any significant delay would result in loss of the funding and therefore no schemes would be delivered until a new source of funding could be found.

3.2 In fact the issue of delays to motor traffic caused by the scheme's arrangements has already been fully considered through an intensive design process and the final design is considered to be the one which has least impact. Traffic modelling has been carried out on the scheme which has indicated that any delay caused to motor traffic would be within acceptable tolerances.

3.3 As regards the issue of value for money, these schemes will be financed from a dedicated fund which cannot be used for any other purpose. This is, therefore, a question of principle as to whether spending on cycling facilities represents good use of public funds.

4.0 Reasons for decision

4.1 These schemes have been selected and designed to comply with current Government policy on Active Travel and accord with the regional Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan adopted in 2019. They are also in keeping with action on local Climate Change and Public Health concerns. The West Midlands Bike Life 2019 report survey results indicate clear support from the public for such schemes.

4.2 The clear majority of consultation responses favour their implementation. No unacceptable disadvantages have been identified, and three respondents (12% of first consultation) indicated that this would provide them with a useful route for daily journeys to New Cross Hospital.

5.0 Financial implications

The funding for development and delivery of the Active Travel schemes is from the Active Travel Fund. The approved capital budget includes the budgets for Ring Road St Peter's/ St Andrew's (£0.439m) and Wednesfield Road (£0.737m). In the case of the Wednesfield Road scheme this will be combined with an element from the Transforming Cities (Better Streets) Fund approved under a separate report.

Failure to deliver schemes will result in recovery by the West Midlands Combined Authority or the DfT of any funding spent on development.

[SB/29072021/D]

6.0 Legal implications

6.1 Acceptance of the Active Travel Fund is subject to conditions set by DfT. The Council will need to abide by these or it may be subject to clawback.

[TC/29072021/V]

7.0 Equalities implications

7.1 These projects involve improving conditions for active travel modes, which are accessible to a large proportion of the population and enable access to work, services and amenities. In designing active travel infrastructure the needs of people with disabilities are taken into account, both as users and as people who may be impacted.

8.0 All other Implications

8.1 These schemes have implications for Climate Change and other environmental issues as they involve provision of safer cycling infrastructure and consequently promotion of cycling as an alternative to use of motor vehicles. This creates the opportunity to travel by physically active means which has benefits for public health both physical and mental. It also reduces harmful effects of motor traffic such as carbon emissions, other air pollutants, noise and congestion.

8.2 Travel by active means also avoids the need to share enclosed spaces typical of using public transport, which would reduce infection transmission for airborne viruses such as coronavirus.